IV

A Munduruca makes me a present of the mummified head of a Parintintin girl, and tells me how and why he killed her.

One of these barbarians, who was twenty-five or thirty years old, outgoing and bold, and a voluble talker, made me a present on the following day of the mummified head of a Parintintin girl. This head, which is now to be found in the National Museum [Rio de Janeiro], retains its abundant hair, which is partly shaved in front as though with a razor. The forehead thus appears to be prolonged nearly to the middle of the skull; in the center of this artificial forehead stands a circular cluster of black hair. This head, which was ornamented with [84] brilliantly colored feathers, must have belonged to a girl fashionable in her own tribe.

Here I must point out that the Munduruca often make war on enemy heathens for the purpose of capturing women and children rather than killing them. They do kill the men, whose heads they preserve as trophies. When preparing for these forays, they frankly say: "I am going because I need a woman to marry, or a little one to be my wife's child."

A Munduruca warrior would therefore be greatly concerned to capture rather than to kill a girl like the one whose head was offered me.

Indeed, the barbarian told me that he had killed her by mistake, failing in the heat of battle to discern her sex. She was running out of the hut which he and his companions had taken at dawn by surprise, and he had thrown himself upon her, piercing her through the back with his powerful spear. He felt sorry when he found that she was a woman, and a young one at that. But nevertheless he cut off her head, removing the brain, and smoked it over a green wood fire until it became mummified.

It was strange to witness the extreme tenderness the barbarian bestowed on this enemy head. A deadly hatred has ruled for many years between the Munduruca and Parintintin tribes, and wars of extermination take place between them.

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level also, and there is no land-holding unit in Munduruc society. The man who chooses a garden site and initiates and directs the labor upon it, however, is entitled to its proceeds. This man thereby becomes the "owner" of the yield of a completed garden, but not of the terrain itself. Even this is a very loose concept, for it will be seen that food is freely shared among relatives and fellow villagers. A person who, for some reason, does not have a garden is invariably given food or allowed to harvest from the garden of another.

The Munduruc coöperate extensively in their horticultural work. Although almost all married men have their own gardens, the heavy work of clearing the forest is done by an all-village male work group. Each man who plans a garden invites all the other men of the village to help him. He supplies the food, usually beverages made of palm fruit and sweet manioc, consumed while actually doing the work. The work is done under the general supervision of the man whose garden is being cleared. His directing activities, however, consist of little more than deciding on the location and extent of the garden. These collective garden-clearing ventures are of doubtful efficiency. The participants generally dawdle on the way to their work, bathing, gathering fruits, and chatting. The actual labor is frequently interrupted by joking, conversation, eating, and little jaunts into the wood in search of parrots and pigeons. I have seen gardens being cleared by Brazilians and single families of Munduruc in which far fewer man-hours produced equal results. Ethnographic literature presents many similar instances of collective labor for purposes of enjoyment and companionship. These same motivations obtain among the Munduruc; but coöperation is also valued and demanded as a positive expression of social solidarity and has its roots in the social structure.

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ponents to force back the forearm of the other. In conversation the Munduruc[illegible] refrain from personal comparisons and moral judgments, and it is difficult for the outsider even to find out who collects the most rubber.

PROPERTY AND DISTRIBUTION

Rights to the use of natural resources are held by the community as an entity. New residents or visitors in a village are free, however, to hunt and fish where they please, and may clear garden land if they plan to remain long enough to reap the harvest. There are no fixed village territories, but villages are too far apart for hunting rights to overlap. It sometimes happens, however, that the men of one village chase a herd of wild pigs into the immediate environs of another. On such occasions the animals are pursued and killed by the hunters, but the men of the other village are usually notified and invited to join the hunt. Also, a traveler is free to kill game along the trail wherever he may be.

Gardens are held only by usufruct rights; when the land is exhausted after two years it reverts to the common domain. The yield of gardens, hunting, and fishing are considered the property of the person who owns the garden or made the kill. But these rights lose significance when seen in the light of the distribution system. Any food that comes into the household is shared by the extended family, and if there is a surplus it is distributed to all the households in the village. No one person or family can go hungry if others have food; to refuse a request for food is unheard of among the savannah Munduruc[illegible] and would be regarded as utterly reprehensible.

Private property is restricted to tools, utensils, ornaments, wearing apparel, and other portable items. The average man owns one or two bows and a quantity of arrows of various types, and a very few own muzzle-loading

shotguns. A scattering of breech-loading shotguns and Winchester .44-caliber carbines is also found in the savannah villages. Each man also possesses a few fishhooks and some line, steel axes, knives, a machete, and usually a hoe. Other items of personal property include a hammock, two sets of cotton shirts and trousers, and a variety of such miscellaneous things as buckshot, a comb, matches, and cigarette papers.

Female property includes metal household utensils, ceramic pots, dresses, hammocks, needles and thread, scissors, knives, baskets, beads, brilliantine, hammock looms, tin cans, and a variety of gew-gaws. Items of personal property are given away if the request is persistently and strongly phrased, but these gifts are generally in nonutilitarian articles. Hoes, knives, and similar items are less often requested, but they are freely loaned.

Trade and the influx of manufactured items have greatly expanded the inventory of Munduruc\u00fa personal property. But there is no indication of any differentiation of the population by wealth. The only productive resources owned by individual Munduruc\u00fa are the rubber avenues, and every man has one. The savannah Munduruc\u00fa derive no profit from the labor of others nor do they maintain commercial relations with their fellows.

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among the members of the house. This collectivism may be seen in the fact that each household has but one fireplace, where all cooking is done. Food for the entire extended family, including the portion to be contributed to the men's house, is prepared there, and the cooking is done by any women who happen to be in the house at that time. Water is fetched from the stream in gourds by the women and is freely used by all occupants.

The unitary nature of the extended family of females in distribution and consumption applies also to the organization of production. Although gardens are nominally considered to be the property of the man who chose the site and organized the work of clearing it, the owner's wife is generally assisted in weeding and harvesting by the other women of the household. Also, any woman of the extended family feels free to go to the garden to dig yams or gather minor vegetable crops—formal ownership has limited meaning when the yield is unquestioningly shared by the household.

Cooperation and collectivism extend to relationships between households also. When a hunter kills a large game animal, it is immediately butchered, quartered, and equally divided among the houses of the villages. This is rational economic procedure, because fresh meat spoils in a very short time in the Tropics, and waste would result if the extended family kept all the kill. Furthermore, frequently only one or two men raise and kill game during a day's hunt; inter-house sharing thus has a mutual economic security aspect. But beyond these considerations, it is considered proper to divide food. Thus, even if a man from each household kills a wild pig, the animals are still quartered and divided. There is symbolic importance in such exchange, and failure to share food freely is a serious breach of etiquette. The strongest bonds of gift giving in

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food, as well as other articles, is between houses of more closely related females. But sharing is not structured exclusively by kinship; food was also given to our household without question or request for payment. It was understood by the Indians, of course, that we would ultimately reciprocate by the distribution of manufactured articles, but the mutual exchanges existed on a general level between our house and the village and not between individuals in a trade of specific commodities.

The women of all village households frequently coöperate in the harvesting of manioc and the preparation of farinha, especially when large quantities are to be produced. These occasions show lucidly how nebulous are concepts of property among the savannah Mundurucú, for coöperation extends to the manufacture of farinha for trade to the whites. Men commonly arrange for the sale of farinha to a trader and then call upon the women of their household to commence gathering and preparing the tubers. The women then invite women of other households to join them in the work. If the man who contracted the sale of farinha has an inadequate supply of manioc in his garden, the women frequently take the tubers from a garden in which there is a surplus, but which might belong to a member of another household. During the course of toasting the manioc flour, the invited women feel free to take portions of the completed product for their own households. The women of the house initiating production contribute most of the manioc and the bulk of the labor, and the productive process is, therefore, oriented to the household. The women of the other houses expect reciprocity at some time in the future, but there is no strict accounting of what is due in labor and manioc to individuals or extended families.

That farinha belongs to whoever initiates its production